

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

Claims 1-19 (cancelled).

Claim 20 (currently amended): A sampler for taking a sample from a body cavity comprising a tubular means adapted to be introduced in said cavity, ~~the introduction end of which is curved to define a central sampling opening,~~ a storage means connected to said tubular means and a vacuum means connected to said storage means and/or said tubular means; said tubular means comprising a rigid tube having a diameter of at least 1 cm and a curved introduction end, wherein said rigid tube in operation providing a closure in the body cavity for a flushing solution when expelled; ~~and only at the curved introduction end~~ said sampler further comprising a number of sampling openings is provided only at the curved introduction end, wherein said number of sampling openings comprises a central opening having a diameter of less than 5 mm; said sampler further comprising a liquid containing means and a pump means to expel said flushing solution from said liquid containing means through said curved introduction end of said rigid tube.

Claim 21 (cancelled).

Claim 22 (currently amended): The sampler according to claim 20, comprising a further opening for expelling a liquid adjacent to said ~~sample~~ number of sampling opening.

Claim 23 (currently amended): The sampler according to claim 22, wherein said vacuum means comprise ~~a~~ said pump means.

Claim 24 (currently amended): The sampler according to claim 22, wherein said storage means comprise ~~a~~ said liquid containing means.

Claim 25 (previously presented): The sampler according to claim 21, wherein said liquid containing means have a volume of less than 10 cc.

Claim 26 (previously presented): The sampler according to claim 20, wherein said vacuum means comprise a plunger-cylinder.

Claim 27 (currently amended): The sampler according to claim 26, wherein said rigid tube comprises said cylinder.

Claim 28 (currently amended): The sampler according to claim 20, comprising a sealing means for said openings.

Claim 29 (currently amended): The sampler according to claim 20, wherein said vacuum means ~~comprise~~ comprises a plunger in said tubular means, wherein abutment means are provided to define relative movement of said plunger and said tubular means.

Claim 30 (currently amended): The sampler according to claim 29, further comprising a biasing means for said plunger.

Claim 31 (currently amended): A sampler assembly, comprising a sampler for taking a sample from a body cavity comprising a tubular means adapted to be introduced in said cavity, ~~the introduction end of which is curved to define a central sampling opening,~~ a storage means connected to said tubular means and a vacuum means connected to said storage means and/or tubular means, said tubular means comprising a rigid tube having a diameter of at least 1 cm and a curved introduction end, ~~and only at the curved introduction end~~ said sampler further comprising a number of sampling openings only at said curved introduction end, wherein said number of sampling openings comprises a central opening ~~is provided~~ having a diameter of less than 5 mm; said sampler further comprising a liquid containing means and a pump means to expel a flushing solution liquid from said liquid containing means to the through said curved introduction end of said rigid tube, said rigid tube in operation providing a closure in the body cavity for said flushing solution when expelled ~~wherein said liquid containing means is filled with a flushing solution.~~

Claim 32 (previously presented): The sampler assembly according to claim 31, wherein said flushing solution comprises physiological saline.

Claim 33 (previously presented): A kit, comprising the sampler according to claim 20 and a closable container for containing said sample, said container being separate from said sampler.

Claim 34 (previously presented): A kit, comprising the sampler assembly according to claim 31, and a closable container for containing said sample, said container being separate from said sampler.

Claim 35 (currently amended): A method for taking a sample from a body cavity comprising introducing a sampler tube into the entrance of said cavity, said sampler tube comprising a tubular means adapted to be introduced in said cavity, ~~the introduction end of which is curved to define a central sampling opening, a storage means connected to said tubular means and a vacuum means connected to said storage means and/or said tubular means, said tubular means comprising a rigid tube having a diameter of at least 1 cm and a curved introduction end; and only at the curved introduction end said sampler tube further comprising a number of sampling openings is provided only at the curved introduction end.~~ wherein said number of sampling openings comprises a central opening having a diameter of less than 5 mm, said sampler further comprising a liquid containing means and a pump means to expel a flushing solution from said liquid containing means through said curved introduction end of said rigid tube, said rigid tube in operation providing a closure in the body cavity for a flushing solution when expelled; moving the said sampler tube in said cavity up to contact with the a blind end of the cavity; expelling said flushing solution into said body cavity; and taking a said sample by suctioning material said sample at the said curved introduction end of said sampler tube through said number of sampling openings ~~an opening thereof, wherein after inserting said sampler tube and before taking a sample, a flushing solution is expelled from said sampler tube into said body cavity.~~

Claim 36 (previously presented): The method according to claim 35, wherein said flushing solution is expelled from a chamber inside said tube and said sample is introduced in said chamber.

Claim 37 (previously presented): The method according to claim 35, wherein said flushing solution comprises a physiological saline solution.

Claim 38 (currently amended): The method according to claim 35, ~~further comprising transferring said sample to~~ wherein after sampling, a container is provided and the contents of the sampling tube is transferred to said container which is subsequently closed and shipped.

Claim 39 (previously presented): The method according to claim 38, wherein said container is provided with a preserving agent.